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ABSTRACT

More and more programs are being developed to strengthen the academic preparation of incoming community college students, reduce overlap between college and high school curricula, and facilitate the transition between secondary and postsecondary education. This paper highlights various programs devoted to these goals. First, efforts to strengthen the academic skills of high school students are considered, including faculty-teacher interaction, cooperative programs to improve high school instruction, and the sharing of counselors, tutors, and facilities. Second, problems of articulation between high school and community college program content are reviewed, and two model articulation programs in vocational education are described. Third, efforts to attract gifted students to the community college are explored, including a program that permits high school seniors to earn college credit while still in high school. Finally, the articulation and cooperative activities of the Los Angeles Community College District, the City Colleges of Chicago, the Dallas County Community College District, Miami-Dade Community College, and the St. Louis Community College District are briefly described. Highlighted are college courses offered in high schools, various services and programs to strengthen the bond with local high schools, programs that grant college credit for vocational skills mastery at the high school, programs for high school students with special talents in the arts, and cooperation in music and the arts. (KL)

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IMPROVING CURRICULUM BY WORKING WITH HIGH SCHOOLS

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BULLETIN

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Improving Curriculum By Working With High Schools

Today, three-fourths of the nation's high school graduates continue in some form of post secondary education. But what kind of pre-college preparation have these students had?

High school students today are taking fewer academically demanding courses than they did in past years. The proliferation of electives, coupled with the granting of credit for work experience, has reduced the number of academic courses completed. As a result, community colleges today are devoting a large percentage of their resources to helping students bridge the academic gap so they can move effectively from high school to college. Research conducted by the Center for the Study of Community Colleges has shown that more than one-third of all class sections offered today in mathematics and in English composition are at a pre-college level. To raise the level of community college education and still maintain some semblance of the "open door" policy, an increasing number of colleges and universities are now working more directly with the high schools. They see that improving the quality of their feeder schools is a necessary first step to the effectiveness of their own curriculum.

More and more programs are being developed to strengthen the academic preparation of incoming students and to facilitate the transition from high school to college. These programs share common goals: first, improving students' academic skills and thereby increasing the colleges' academic curriculum; second, reducing overlap and duplication between college and high school curriculum; and third, devoting more time, attention and resources to degree and transfer programs. The various means used to achieve these goals is the subject of this issue of the *Bulletin*. Basically, the programs take three general approaches: strengthening academic high school skills; developing closer program articulation; and attracting gifted high school students to the college.

Strengthening The Academic Skills of High School Students

In order to improve students' academic skills before they graduate from high school, some colleges are sharing their resources with high school staff members. For example, some colleges make their learning centers available to high schools, provide student tutors, work with high school teachers to achieve an understanding of what is expected in terms of entrance level college skills, and/or assist high school faculty in developing effective instructional techniques and strategies.

Faculty-Teacher Interaction

In some places, institutions are banding together to strengthen high school to college transfer. The University of Illinois has instituted a program that provides high school English teachers with a firsthand look at what will be expected of their students when they enroll in freshman composition courses. This program's goal is to make teachers aware of what can be done in their own high schools to prepare students for college-level work. Each year the University invites English teachers who are on sabbatical to participate in its freshman writing course. The teachers attend a week-long orientation session, attend a writing seminar with freshman composition faculty, and then actually teach sections of the freshman writing course and meet with a faculty advisor on a regular basis. One of this program's benefits is the fruitful exchange of ideas and information between high school and college instructors about techniques and approaches to teaching writing.

Improving High School Instruction

A number of cooperative school-college programs have been initiated to improve instruction in the high schools. Many college instructors now are working with their counterparts in area high schools to strengthen teaching in their respective subjects. Among the most successful of these projects is the Bay Area Writing Project.

Motivated by the large percentage of incoming students who needed

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remedial training in composition, a group of Berkeley English professors set out to improve the quality of students' writing by improving the quality of teaching in high school composition classes. They organized a five week summer workshop for junior high and high school English teachers. Through the workshop, teachers were trained to become writing consultants in their own schools, taking back the skills they learned and sharing them with others. With the ripple effect and the success of the program, the Bay Area Writing Project now reaches over 1,000 teachers a year.

Another such project was undertaken by the faculty at Queens College in New York, who felt that students coming from the local junior and senior high schools could not read or write well enough to take advantage of college-level courses. The English faculty approached the chairs of local high school English departments and formed an association called Common Concerns of English Educators. Through regularly scheduled monthly meetings, they discussed teaching techniques used in literature and composition, formulated goals, and shared their successes and failures in tackling various common problems.

Counseling, Tutors, and Shared Facilities

More recently, these same Queens College instructors have broadened the scope of their efforts to see that high school students are adequately prepared to enroll in English classes at their college without having to take remedial reading or composition courses. The group designed and implemented an English curriculum from the junior year in high school through the freshman year in college. Teaching seminars were held for high school teachers. Reading and writing labs were set up by Queens College at each area high school; college faculty and laboratory coordinators from the college attended teaching seminars and they were then placed in the schools. High school teachers were granted release time to run the labs, and a special English class was developed to train more advanced high school students to be tutors in their own schools. Other colleges find it advantageous to share their campus resources with the secondary schools by inviting counselors, teachers, or administrators to their campuses.

The University of Southern California sends tutors to area high schools each year. While community colleges cannot enact more stringent requirements for high school graduation, they can raise their levels of expectation for incoming students, and they can encourage students to take more academic subjects while they are in high school. Counseling is one means of encouraging students to develop educational goals and strategies well before graduation. College staff can provide information to their high school counterparts and to students about the basic skills, concepts, and strategies that will help them in college as well as in the job market. Community college staff can also work with high school staff to encourage an increase in the number of solid academic courses required for graduation.

Facilitating Articulation

Considerable concern has been expressed over the lack of articulation or continuity of academic program content between what is taught in high schools and what is presented in freshman college courses. Many incoming college students are unable to handle freshman-level courses, and many students fail or drop out of first year college courses because they find them too difficult. This gap in content and teaching level can be narrowed with some effort at both ends. High school teachers need to find out what will be expected of students at the freshman level and then make the necessary adjustments in their courses. College faculty can be the catalyst for this process and can also find out how their subjects are being taught in the schools so that the transition between the two educational levels is eased.

Many students, especially those who are above average academically, complain that much of the material presented in the first two years of college is a repeat of high school course material. As much as one-third of college English, science, social science, and mathematics curriculum content may be simply a rearranged version of high school courses. This kind of duplication is expensive.

Articulation with Vocational Programs

Vocational program articulation is receiving much attention today in community colleges across the country. In Maryland, the Hagerstown Junior College staff members have been working with the County Board of Education members on vocational program articulation since 1974. The two agencies developed model articulation agreements between secondary and post-secondary programs in the areas of secretarial science, nursing, and distributive education. The purpose of these agreements was to reduce overlap and duplication of instruction in educational programs and to encourage faculty from both institutions to cooperate in the smooth transition from secondary to post-secondary education. The development of the agreement entailed an examination of program competencies by high school and college faculty; a determination of the level at which the high school student has met minimum criteria for completing college courses; and the establishment of procedures for credentialing the student's competence. An evaluation of the articulation program revealed that it significantly increased college enrollments and student satisfaction.

Another example of a vocational articulation program is a cooperative project developed by Parkway West Area Technical School and the Community College of Allegheny County (Pennsylvania) to develop a task level agreement for the welding sequences extending from high school to post secondary levels. Instructors and employers formed a Welding Craft Advisory Committee to coordinate four project procedures: (1) a survey of area employers was taken to identify the task competencies required of welders; (2) performance objectives and specific measures for each of the identified competencies were developed; (3) existing courses of study were evaluated; and (4) courses of study were reorganized so that the two-year welding program at the Technical School was directly equivalent to the Community College's Welding I and II. These procedures are noteworthy in that they overcome the shortcomings of traditional high school/college articulation agreements where a student's subject mastery is often assumed rather than proven and the tasks are usually identified by educators rather than employers.

Attracting Gifted Students To The Community College

To enable colleges to use more resources for their degree and transfer programs, some community college

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Attracting Students

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staff are encouraging outstanding high school students to attend their institutions. The various programs include scholarships for achievers, honors programs, invitations to special events at the college, credit for college-level courses taught at the high schools, and special summer school programs at the college campus.

College Credit Earned in High School

Arrangements that permit high school seniors to earn college credit in specially designed courses at their high school benefit the high school, the student, and the college. These programs broaden high school curriculum, eliminate duplication of curriculum between secondary and college courses, and reduce the time required for both high school and post secondary degrees.

At John Wood Community College in Quincy, Illinois, the High School Escrow Program provides such an opportunity. It enables senior high school students in the district to combine courses taken for high school credit with college-level coursework and thereby accumulate college credit during their senior year in high school. College courses are taught by full-time instructors who must have a master's degree in the subject area they teach and who also teach other classes for high school credit at the participating high school. The instructors are given a course syllabus from the college and must follow the same course content outline and procedures that are used in the traditional John Wood courses.

News From The Districts

How are these common concerns being addressed in the six districts participating in our Mellon and Ford projects? What approaches are being taken? Across the country, numerous programs are being planned and implemented in a continuing effort to bolster general education in the colleges. There are many more worthwhile programs than we have space to detail, but a brief look at a few of these projects is presented below.

Los Angeles Offers College Classes in High Schools

The Los Angeles Community Colleges are now offering college-credit classes on local high school campuses. Courses being offered during the school day include beginning and advanced foreign languages, advanced mathematics, and sciences. This program gives students a head start toward their college degree objectives and it also assists the Los Angeles Unified School District with the teacher shortage in these areas. All nine of the District's community colleges are participating with high schools in their immediate areas.

The District has distributed over 60,000 copies of *18 Almanac*, a magazine-style handbook for leaving high school, to fourth year students in 200 schools in the Los Angeles area. It describes plans for college acceptance, how large a role work plays in one's life, how to pay for college, the importance of scores on college entrance examinations, technical training after high school, and the outlook for promising career fields. It also provides students with information on a wide variety of programs offered at the Los Angeles Community Colleges.

Another program allows students in grades 11 and 12 to take honors classes and vocational courses at Los Angeles colleges if they are recommended by the high school principal and attend their high school for a minimum day.

All Los Angeles Community College District counselors participate in College Day and Career Day programs at the high schools. Every year the high school counselors receive a current set of college catalogs, career education books, and a Directory of Programs and Courses offered in the District. Each college also has an open house program and high school counselor conferences on campus, where programs and services are explained and a tour of the campus facilities is given.

College department staff meet frequently with their counterparts in high school to plan special events. The colleges often send notices to high schools inviting students and faculty to special campus events such as Cinco de Mayo, athletic events, and theater productions.

Chicago Has "Adopt a High School" Program

Recognizing that the community college alternative must be made attractive to high schools students, City Colleges of Chicago (CCC) has established a number of services and programs to strengthen the bond with secondary schools in Chicago. These include admission counselor visits to CCC and recruitment visitations by CCC personnel, especially faculty, to area high schools. The recent involvement by faculty in these visits has been very popular with high school students who have praised the high quality of first-hand information about CCC programs.

In addition, CCC runs its highly successful College Acceleration Program (CAP) for more than 1700 high school seniors at 48 area high schools. The CAP students take regular college courses from CCC instructors who go to the high schools to teach the courses before and after regular school hours as well as during break periods. The students are recommended by their schools and must meet the entry requirements of the courses for which they enroll. In the last two years, CAP students have earned more than 20,000 credit hours.

The Chicago School Superintendent pioneered the "Adopt a School" program with business and industry when she ran the school system in Oakland, California. After meeting with her, the City Colleges have decided to begin an "Adopt a High School" program, with CCC's Kennedy-King College and two area feeder high schools as part of the pilot effort. This linkage project will involve exchange of course informa-

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tion, articulation discussions, sharing of resources, and special recruitment programs. If the model proves successful, sister CCC campuses will participate with high schools in their areas.

Credit By Articulation in Dallas

The Dallas County Community College District has been involved in vocational articulation between the county high schools and district colleges for four years. The program is called Credit by Articulation and its purpose is to grant equivalent college credit for mastery at the high school level of the same competencies required by the college programs. Specific competencies and ways of measuring mastery of each are clearly defined for each college course involved. These courses are usually entry level. As students achieve the required level of skill in high school, their teachers sign the Student Profile to allow them college credit.

Ten programs now offer credit by articulation in areas ranging from digital electronics to child development. Three new programs will be ready for the fall semester in air conditioning, diesel mechanics, and police science. Through these programs, high school students have the opportunity to finish college sooner and at a lower cost. The project director reports that Credit by Articulation has dramatically increased the communication and respect between high school teachers and community college instructors. The programs are funded by grants from the Texas Educational Agency and are available to all high school districts in Dallas County.

Miami-Dade Initiates Performing and Visual Arts Center

Cooperation between the high schools and Miami-Dade Community College has already begun. While a dual enrollment system has been in place for some years, work has recently started in developing "writing across the curriculum" programs. Another especially interesting program just initiated is the Performing and Visual Arts Center (PAVAC). High school students with special talents in the arts will spend 15 hours a week on Miami-Dade Community College campuses working with Dade County Public School and Miami-Dade faculty members to develop their skills.

As part of its Emphasis on Excellence Program, Miami-Dade offers the Summer Program for the Gifted and Talented, now in its third year. Two hundred high school students are selected to participate in a six-week summer program conducted by the College. The program is designed to provide high quality college-level instruction with a blend of theory and "hands on" experience, utilizing modern equipment and facilities.

Another facet of the Emphasis on Excellence Program is the High School Achievement Awards. These are scholarships awarded by the College to outstanding Dade County high school seniors graduating in the top ten percent of their class. This scholarship provides approximately one thousand dollars to students who earn an Associate degree at Miami-Dade, and the recipients continue to receive the scholarship until completion of their AA or AS degree by meeting certain academic requirements.

Finally, Miami-Dade Community College is a founding member of the Southeast Florida Educational Consortium (SPEC) of colleges and universities which has begun a project to increase the awareness of parents and students about the attitudes students need to acquire, basic skills they must develop, and academic courses they should complete to be adequately prepared for college.

Workshop Series Planned

One of the objectives of our Ford and Mellon projects is to identify exemplary programs in the six districts across the country and then make this information available to the participating colleges. For this purpose, we are currently planning a series of six workshops to be hosted by each of the districts in their respective cities this fall and next spring, on topics of particular interest. The Los Angeles Community College District will kick off the series with a program on Transfer, Honors and Excellence, scheduled for October 28th and 29th. Please save the date and watch for further information as it becomes available!

St. Louis Takes Jazz Band to Schools

Music and art are two of the areas in the St. Louis Community College District in which there are significant high school related activities. On the Meramec campus, the jazz band director organizes an annual high school band festival which usually features an outstanding guest artist. He also distributes a regular newsletter outlining band activities to the high schools, and serves as guest director for high school band rehearsals – giving a kind of mini-clinic. Forest Park's jazz director has organized a student ensemble which tours high schools in the service area and answers questions about the department and the college.

In addition to annual visitations to high school art classes, the Florissant Valley Art Department sponsors an annual Invitational Exhibit in the campus gallery which presents works of art to faculty from Metro-area high schools. This spring, the Forest Park Art Department hosted a two-week exhibit of works by students of the Honors Art High School, a magnet school which draws artistically talented students from throughout the city of St. Louis.

Each of the three campuses maintains regular visits to area high schools. Forest Park conducts an annual workshop for high school counselors on its campus; Meramec conducts financial aid workshops in the area high schools; and Florissant Valley makes visits to selected junior high schools as well, discussing the high school courses which lead to various college curricula.

Aside from programs in the arts, Forest Park's Science/Engineering/Technology Division has initiated an annual open house which includes lab tours, demonstrations, and exhibits that range from a slide presentation on astronomy or energy conservation to what to look for in stereo systems. All three campuses sponsor a variety of high school athletic tournaments, and Florissant Valley campus has co-sponsored a career fair for junior high students with the St. Louis Public School System.

Information about material or sources is available from the Center on request.

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